The Tenth National Heritage Fellowships 1991

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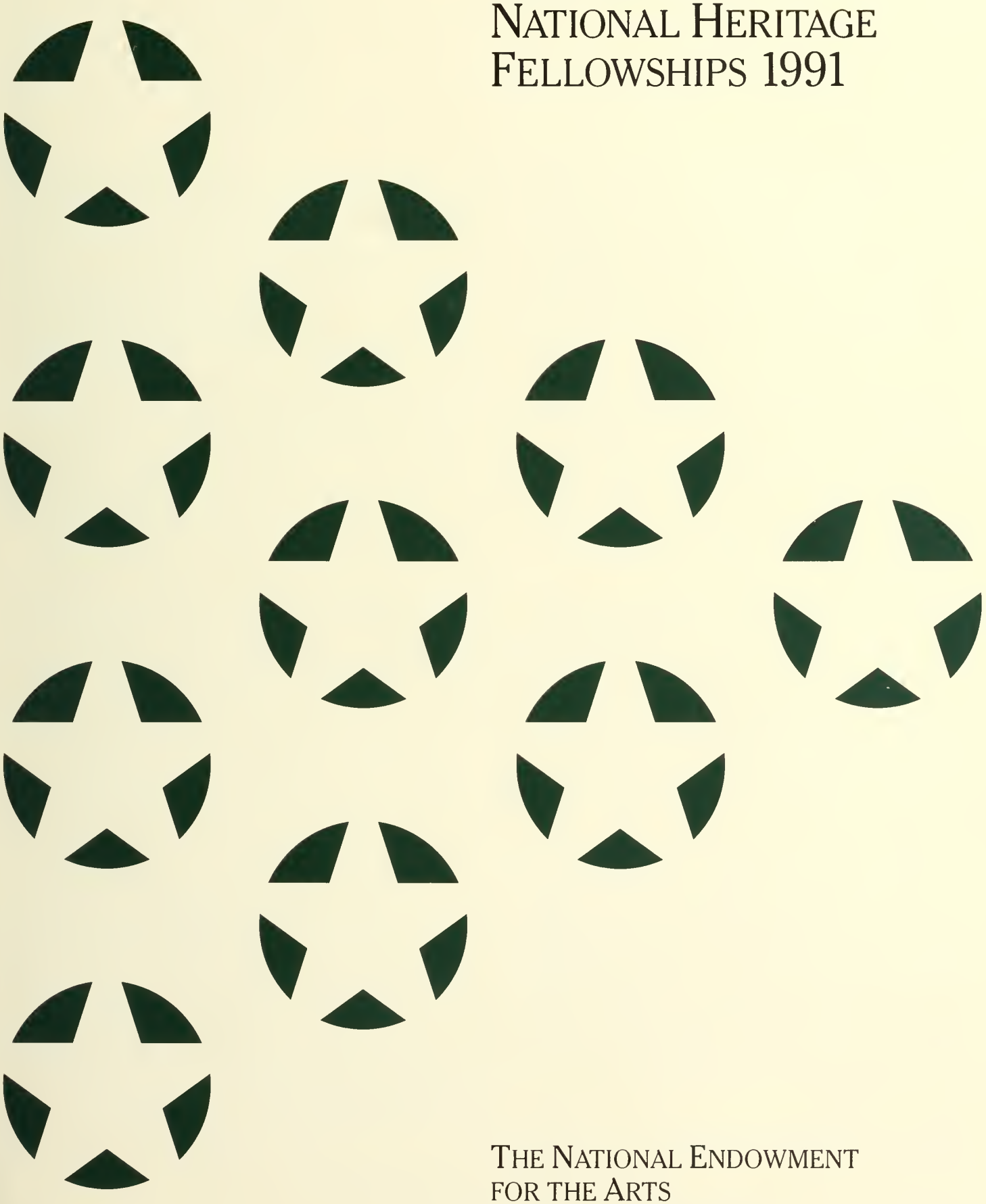


The National Endowment
for the Arts
Folk Arts Program

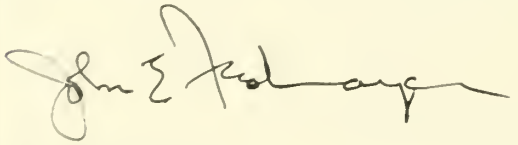
THE NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIPS 1991

In 1983, the second year of the National Heritage Fellowships, one of the honorees was a distinguished traditional duck decoy carver from Maryland named Lem Ward. He has since passed on, but today, in his home town of Crisfield, Maryland, there is an exhibit memorializing the exquisite bird carvings he created. On the evening of his award ceremony, Mr. Ward was too ill to attend, but he sent his grandson, Ward Linton, to receive his citation and to read from the stage this statement:

> Whatever good I have done in my 86 years, I owe to others. First to my father who understood that a young boy's curiosity can be shaped with love and patience; second to nature which has provided me the greatest studio and the most perfect models any artist may ever imagine; and last of all to God who taught me that faith is the foundation of all knowledge. Through all three, I have learned that man has the power both to destroy and to create beauty, and since there can never be too much beauty in the world, man's correct choice is eternal. . . .

The National Heritage Fellowships serve as one way by which the American people, through their federal agency, the National Endowment for the Arts and its Folk Arts Program, can thank the master traditional artists who continue to make Mr. Ward's "correct choice." Over and over again, these masters demonstrate the special beauties particular to their own region or way of life or cultural history. The Endowment takes great pride in these awards and the celebrations that accompany them every fall, for they embody many of our fundamental purposes and goals, both as an agency and as a people.

We thank, in turn, all those whose efforts make this joyful occasion possible: the public and private partners who share in the arrangements for the concert and accompanying activities, the devoted professionals across the nation who help in the many tasks required to bring the artists to Washington and make their visit a thrilling and meaningful experience for them and their audiences, and the extraordinary staff of our Folk Arts program. And finally, we thank once again the National Heritage Fellows for 1991 for demonstrating through their lives and their work just how complex and how inspiring the arts of the people can be.



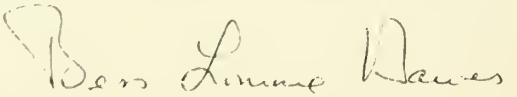
John E. Frohnmayer
Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts

The first National Heritage Fellowships were awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts in the summer of 1982. This year — 1991 — thus marks our tenth anniversary; and, like all anniversaries, seems to call for some reflection upon the past years, some summing up.

Almost 150 artists have received these high awards. They come from 37 of the states and territories; by far the majority are musicians and singers, a scant third being crafts workers along with a handful of dancers and storytellers. Almost 30 percent of our awardees are women, and all major ethnic and racial groups have been represented.

Each year, as we celebrate, the Folk Arts staff wonders briefly: since this year's group of artists is so superlative, can next year's possibly be just as exemplary, as all-round wonderful? Each year we find out again that it can be and it is. Our tenth anniversary group is a fine example: we have artisans in wood, fiber and leather; we have virtuosos on guitar, flute, sanshin, banjo, fiddle and bagpipe; we have singers who write new songs, singers who are masters of lyric improvisations, and singers who faithfully maintain texts in languages hundreds of years old. And we have cultural leaders, the kind of artists around whom young people gather, who set the tone and maintain the quality, who see to it that old aesthetic styles and elements aren't rejected only because they are old, and that new aesthetic styles and elements aren't accepted only because they are new.

National Heritage Fellows continue to tell us that they don't believe they really measure up to the people they learned their art from, that their mentors or teachers who have gone before should have been the ones to get the awards. (In a few years the students of these same artists will be saying the same thing.) Such statements reflect more than modesty; they express a deeply felt principle that there is a chain of communication between artistic generations and that each individual traditional artist, young and old, is a link in that chain. As we begin the second decade of the National Heritage Fellowships, it is apparent that the especial responsibility of the Folk Arts Program is to help keep that chain strong, to make sure that artistry is celebrated across the nation but even more plainly recognized in the place where it most counts - back home - thus assuring opportunities for senior artists to carry on their essential work of nourishing the generations to come. May the next ten years be as productive as the last ten have been.



Bess Lomax Hawes
Director
Folk Arts Program

Credits

The 1991 National Heritage Fellowships ceremonies were produced for the National Endowment for the Arts, Folk Arts Program, by the National Council for the Traditional Arts. The ceremonies were planned and coordinated for NCTA by Claudia Telliho and Julia Olin.

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African-American quilter
Oakland, California

Melvin Wine 13
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1991 National Heritage Fellows

Etta Baker

Etta Baker recalls waking up to the smell of breakfast cooking and the sound of her father's guitar. Her grandfather was a banjo player; her father played banjo and fiddle as well as the guitar; her mother, harmonica and Jew's harp. Etta Baker began to pick the guitar when she was so small she had to lay the instrument on the bed, stand on the floor and fret from the top. Her sister, Cora, is also a superb instrumentalist, and many cousins play and sing. She also represents more than her elegant guitar style; she stands for a musical and cultural tradition that took form in the foothills of the Carolina mountains, a somewhat sheltered region of small farms where families of Anglo, African, and American Indian descent lived. Musicians here play dance tunes, love songs, early rags, and old ballads and the older blues pieces that derive from black string bands. Guitarists here tend to sound like they are playing the banjo; the music is light and easy and enchanting with showers of politely precise notes. It is a an elegant music for dancing.

Born in 1913 in Caldwell County, Etta Baker mastered this style. Most of her life she played only at family gatherings. She married a piano player, Lee Baker, and bore their first children (twins) in 1936; their family was to grow to nine. In the forties, in order to take advantage of a better school system, the family moved to Morganton where both parents went to work in local factories, Etta in a textile mill. She continued to play at home, and in 1965, was recorded by Paul Clayton who issued her music on an acclaimed album, "Instrumental Music of the Southern Appalachians."

In 1973, Etta Baker left the textile mill and since then has concentrated on her music. She enjoys concertizing and traveling and has appeared at the Knoxville World's Fair, the National Folk Festival, and the John Henry Memorial Festival. In 1982 she and her sister, Cora, won the North Carolina Folklore Society's Award and in 1989, the North Carolina Arts Council's Folk Heritage Award. A CD of her music has recently been released.

Etta Baker is enjoying her music at this time of her life. After nine children, 24 years at the textile mill, and caring for her invalid husband until his death, her time for music has finally come and she is relishing the moments. She generally prefers not to sing because the guitar, she says, can speak for her, and always she strives to perfect her style. "I want my music to be clear," she says, "and not hit a string that's not necessary because that blurs the tune. You want to keep it clear..."

George Blake

George Blake lives on the Hoopa Indian Reservation in Hoopa Valley, California, where he was born in 1944. He is a Yurok-Hupa, a not uncommon combination from the many small tribes that inhabited northern California before European contact. Today his business card describes his art: "Contemporary and Traditional Hupa/Yurok" and he has exhibited widely in both styles. But it appears to be his traditional work that gives him most satisfaction. He says: "I wanted to do what the old people did...I can make elk antler purses, and make them as different as I want...I mean, I could put elks on them, and all these other things and try to show skills an artist would. But I don't. I just like the way they were done a long time ago. And I just keep making them."

George Blake has taken skills and training he learned at a university and put them to his tribe's service. He regularly makes the regalia worn and carried in ceremonial religious dances, not only elk-antler purses, but White Deerskin Dance headdresses, and otter skin Brush Dance quivers. He has learned these skills by combining library research with interviews with older tribal members, such as Mr. Homer Cooper and other respected elders. He learned none of his skills in the course of growing up; each was so fragile and known to so few that it called on all his adult research abilities and personal determination to learn them.

From 1980 to 1983, George Blake served as curator of the Hupa Tribal Museum, and while there he organized a broad program to teach the traditional arts to younger tribal members. He himself taught featherwork and the making of other regalia, also the carving of antlers into Hupa purses and spoons. Almost single-handledly he preserved the techniques required to produce the Yurok sinew-backed bow. His recreation of the Hupa dugout canoe is particularly impressive; he worked for years with the last two tribal elders who knew the crafts; both have since died. He can explain and demonstrate the differences in boat design, (all done with the naked

Far left:
Etta Baker
Photo © Jon Zachary

Center left:
George Blake
Photo © Lee Brumbaugh

Left:
Jack Coen
Photo by Jesse Winch

eye), between the "downriver" boats made for use on the Klamath River and those made for use simply for river crossing on the quieter Trinity. Though several of his boats now sit in California museums, they are built for use, and at least two of his boats have been launched into San Francisco Bay, both proving seaworthy.

It is almost impossible now to visualize a time when, if you needed to carry something, you had to make something to carry it in; if you wanted to cook something, you had to make a pot to cook it in; or if you wanted to travel on water, you had to build a boat. That human beings can learn to solve so many problems working only with the materials of nature and the resources of the human spirit is magnificent; that they can also infuse these necessary articles with grace, elegance, and beauty is awe-inspiring. George Blake has taught many lessons to his young tribal relatives in California; his example can teach the entire nation.

JACK COEN

Jack Coen, was playing his flute one day with great Tipperary accordion player, Paddy O'Brien, when Paddy said, "Imagine that. That tune we played made it clear across the Shannon [River] and we still have it note for note." An even greater miracle is that the tune had also made it note for note clear across the Atlantic, for the two men were having a tune and a cup of tea in the Bronx at the time.

Note for note. That is an important idea in Irish music, for Irish traditional music is centered upon melody; there are hundreds and hundreds of tunes that a respectable Irish fiddler or flutist or accordion player must be able to recall. Jack Coen, like many other Irish musicians, occasionally takes advantage of a tune book. "They're a real guide to memory, you know, that's what a book is — a guide to memory." But having to recollect a tune with or without a guide means reliving its musicality, its emotional impact, its opportunities for ornamentation and embellishment, its "nice places", its stylistic distinction.

Jack Coen is not only a master technician of his instrument, the wooden Irish flute, he is a master of its music. He was born in Woodford, East Galway, in the County of Galway on the west coast of Ireland, a great center for Irish music, sometimes called the "Nashville of Ireland." His brother, Father Charles Coen, himself a fine concertina player, writes, "Jack grew up in a family where music was given more prominence than food or clothing. His father was a musician; the neighbors were musicians. There was always music. They played instruments and danced in the farmhouses at night; they sang in the fields during the day."

Jack was born in 1925 and received his first instrument, a tin whistle, at the age of eight. Just as important to his future career, he feels, was the fact that he was taught the old-fashioned tonic sol-fa system of sight singing in the village school, so that he absorbed the rudiments of music during his childhood and was able ever after to figure things out on his own. As he grew older, he took up the flute, playing first on borrowed instruments and then getting one for himself in a Dublin pawnshop. By this time he was playing regularly in public and supporting himself with farm and road work. In 1949 he came to the United States, eventually settling in New York where his uncle found him a job as a railroad lineman. At the time there were many Irish fiddlers to be found in New York, but few flutists, and his talents came quickly to the fore. He began playing at sessions, dances, and celebrations, including forming an association with the New York Ceilidhe Band. He participated in the first NEA Folk Arts-funded tour: "The Green Fields of America," a seminal event that brought traditional Irish music back to Irish communities across the nation.

He also began to teach. The Folk Arts Program has at least fifty letters in its files, many handwritten, from old and young, attesting to the energy, loving care, and intelligence that Jack Coen puts into his teaching. Many of his students have gone on to win national championships in Ireland, but as impressive is the number of judges who were plainly astounded that students would

Right:
Rose Frank
Photo by David A. Wuerth

Center right:
Eduardo "Lalo" Guerrero

Far right:
Khamvong Insixiengmai
Photo © Jack Vartoogian, NYC

come from the United States more steeped in tradition than native Irish students. For that both Ireland and the United States owe Jack Coen a debt.

Rose Frank

The Nez Perce tribe once spread across northwestern Oregon, northern Idaho, and western Montana. They appear always to have been an artistic and creative people, and long before European contact had established trading relations with distant tribes in British Columbia and California, enabling them to adorn their leather and fibre weaving with blue abalone and dentalia shells from the Pacific Ocean. Their leather and quill work was also notable, and by the late 19th century the excellence of Nez Perce beadwork had gained them an international reputation.

The long tragedy of the Indian wars, the ultimate defeat and exile of their great leader, Chief Joseph, and the continued encroachment of European settlers into their territories changed the lives of the Nez Perce forever and resulted, in part, in the neglect and even the abandonment of their great artistic tradition. Some self-dedicated artists, however, continued the crafts and some younger people troubled to learn them. Mrs. Rose Frank, who was born in Sweetwater, Idaho, in the Nez Perce area, was a notable example. Most of her life was spent quietly as a housewife, working only occasionally outside her home before meeting Ida Blackeagle, an older Nez Perce woman and master artisan who was teaching a class on Nez Perce corn weaving at Lapwai High School. It was there she discovered that she had an artistic vocation.

Many scholars believe that the Nez Perce invented cornhusk weaving. Although neighboring tribes practiced the art as well, the quality of Nez Perce work has always been considered outstanding. Today, Mrs. Frank's work is probably better known in Germany, where several museums have placed standing orders for her "flower pot" hats and storage bags, than in the United States. In both scholarly and traditional circles, she is valued not only for her meticulous craftsmanship, but for her equally tenacious maintenance of traditional aesthetic principles. Each of her bags is decorated on both sides with geometric or floral designs, using materials dyed either with natural or, in these days, the more brilliant commercial dyes. Mrs. Frank prides herself on the fact that she never repeated a design in the 43 years she has been weaving.

The Folk Arts Program received a number of remarkable letters concerning Mrs. Frank's work, some from members of her own tribe, some from scholars. One said, "From careful use of elements normally thrown out (packing string, cornhusk, yarn remnants), she weaves objects of beauty and function, using techniques and designs older than man's memory, traditional pieces that having sprung from the ground have a place, heritage." And a Nez Perce Council member commented on Mrs. Frank's exceptional generosity as a teacher, "She has taught many classes and taken on several apprentices...She instills in her students the thought that they too must strive for excellence in themselves, which will be reflected in their handwork. She had struggled for excellence until it was no longer a struggle, but a part of her everyday living way..."

Eduardo (Lalo) Guerrero

The National Heritage Fellowships are designed to honor those wise and experienced artists of the culture who labor to conserve their historically important artistic traditions. But conservation always requires re-interpretation and sensitive responses to changing times, and so strong cultures always produce and maintain artistic innovators as well as conservators, sometimes discovering these tendencies in the same artist. Lalo Guerrero as a singer is master of a matchless repertoire of *canciones tipicas* and *canciones rancheras*—Mexican folk and folk-like songs. As a composer, he has updated and reinvigorated several of these older song forms by using them to produce a new repertoire of songs, both humorous and tragic, that comment in a totally traditional style on contemporary social issues.

He was born in Tucson, Arizona, in 1916, one of eight surviving children of a family of 27. Life was hard in the Spanish-speaking Southwest in those days; he contracted small pox in a local epidemic in the 1920s and carries the marks of that illness to this day. He believes now that his early life taught him the necessity of struggling to overcome handicaps and strengthened his self-discipline. His mother, Concepción, a fine traditional singer and guitarist whose performances of Mexican folk songs have been recorded for the Arizona Folklore Archives, taught her young son the rudiments of guitar playing, and in the depth of the Depression he left school to try to find work as a musician. In the late 1930s, he moved to southern California where he lives to this day.

In Los Angeles musical circles he soon gained a reputation as a singer-composer, but even more importantly, as a bi-lingual, bi-cultural musician, as scholar Manuel Peña describes him. He appeared throughout the Latin music clubs of Los Angeles and made a great number of recordings that sealed his reputation as "the most uniquely innovative composer-performer of his time, turning out scores of bi-musical *canciones* that combined folk/urban and Mexican/American elements."

During his five-decade performing career, his music has come to symbolize particular eras in the Mexican-American experience. His series of "pachuco" songs so reflected the era of the 40s in Los Angeles that they were used in both the play and the film, "Zoot Suit." His Spanish/English parodies and *canciones comicas (Elvis Perez, Pancho Lopez [Davy Crockett], Lucila)* have convulsed generations of Mexican and English-speaking audiences. And during the 60s he turned to the old form of the *corrido*, the narrative ballad, to express the deep concerns of that painful era. His output was prodigious: "El Corrido de Robert Kennedy." "El Corrido de Cesar Chavez," "El Corrido de Ruben Salazar" (for a newsman killed in a Los Angeles riot), are only a few.

Señor Guerrero still performs. In 1980, he sang at the White House in celebration of the 15th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts, during the same year receiving the Golden Eagle Trophy from NOSOTROS, a Hispanic society. To honor Lalo Guerrero is to honor both the arts and the Spanish-speaking community of the Southwest to both of which he has devoted his life.

KHAMVONG INSIXIENGMAI

Although 20th century immigration to the United States has refreshed our national spirit with a wealth of new artistic styles, forms and ideas, in the performing arts, a central difficulty still persists. No matter how elegant and highly-trained the immigrant artist, if the sung or spoken repertoire is not readily expressible in English, an essential level of communication between artists and audience is fractured. In the languages of Europe and South America, this gulf can occasionally be bridged; in the languages of Africa and Asia, the reunion is more rare.

The extraordinary career of Khamvong Insixiengmai is instructive. He was born in Laos in 1947 and began learning Lao singing from local masters at the age of ten. He continued studying widely in Laos and northwest Thailand until he became a professional singer in the Lao Department of Fine Arts in 1965. By then he had achieved widespread popularity. Actually, because of his exceptional versatility, he became something of a Lao matinee idol. He is able to sing in many of the regional Lao styles and is renowned for his ability to improvise poetry while he is singing. During the war years of the 60s and 70s, he performed widely over the radio as well as giving many live performances. He left Laos for Thailand as a refugee in 1979 before coming to the United States the following year.

On his arrival here he was sent to Bowling Green, Kentucky, and after a year moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where there was a larger community of Laotians. He resolutely determined to make his way independently in this new land and resumed his career as a singer. He made an audiotape, *Music of Laos,* of many of his songs and he performed at local universities, at international festivals, and at world music concerts.

Lao singing is essentially melodic declamation of poetry accompanied by a *kaen* (mouth organ) or other instruments. The primary national song form, the *lum*, is a kind of courtship drama that includes humorous and even feisty repartee between male and female singers and frequent critical interactions with an excited audience. In the past, the singers sometimes actually courted; today professional entertainers are engaged to present the

drama. Because Laos has an undeveloped transportation and communications system, each region of the nation tends to have its own identifiable form of lum. The differences lie in a particular use of scale, a special rhythm, or accompaniment, or dialect. Khamvong Insixiengmai is one of the rare Lao singers who can compose and sing in six or seven of these regional aesthetic forms, and as such, he is truly a cultural treasure to his fellow immigrants who come from many regions.

In a supportive but often uncomprehending environ, he continues to make a noble effort to keep the cultural stream of Lao song running clear in a foreign land, the especial contribution of his peoples to the world's conversation sharp and alive. Every art form could properly wish for so courageous a champion.

Donald L. King

Don King was born in 1923; his home town of Douglas, Wyoming, lay on the North Platte River about a hundred miles due north of Laramie. His father was an old-time cowboy and pretty much of a nomad as his son described him later, and the two wandered together all over the western states. At the age of 14, he was beginning to support himself doing odd jobs on ranches and at rodeos, and trying to learn how to tool leather in his spare time. He seemed to have a knack for leather and by the age of 15 was selling and trading belts, wallets, and various small gear of his own making.

He worked in saddleries and on ranches in California, Montana and Arizona before returning to Wyoming, where in 1946 he married and settled down in the town of Sheridan under the tutelage of his friend Rudy Mudra, an expert saddlemaker who had agreed to take him on as an apprentice. He did piece-work for Mudra before moving out to his own 200-acre ranch outside Sheridan, where for several years he raised cattle and horses while working only part time at the leather trade.

In 1957 he again began saddlemaking and leather-tooling full time, focusing primarily on an outstanding series of trophy saddles — highly ornamented saddles that are given away as prizes in rodeo competitions. Some of Don King's saddles can now be seen in the Cowboy Hall of Fame, the Museum of the American Cowboy, and the Pro Rodeo Hall of Champions. And it was during this period that he developed his hallmark style of leather tooling. One commentator has described it as "characterized by wild roses with a distinctive shape (as though you were looking down at them from approximately a 45-degree angle), arranged in complex, scroll-like patterns...of interlocking circles." Some have compared his design effects to William Morris wallpaper; certainly the craftsmanship is impeccable and of an incredible precision.

The exceptional carving skill was developed on a particular saddle construction, a construction that became so popular in the area that it is now known as the "Sheridan-style saddle," and most knowledgeable people attribute its development to Don King. His saddles are not only ornamental and impressive as museum display items, but also useful to the working rancher; and although a Don King saddle may be beyond their means, working cowboys continue to flock to King's Saddlery where they can be assured of finding working gear of all kinds, including properly stretched ropes and other working tack.

Perhaps this is the truly remarkable feature of Don King's art. His reputation is just as high worldwide—Queen Elizabeth, on a trip to the United States in 1985, requested a visit to King's Saddlery—as it is on the neighboring ranches. He has taken a functional object and applied his own particular aesthetic to it, an aesthetic formed out of an experienced understanding of its form and a wide exposure to foregoing styles of decoration from his artistic predecessors. Not many artists live to see their private vision widely acclaimed by their own audiences; Don King is one of those fortunate few.

Riley "B.B." King

His name is Riley B. King and his middle initial, he says, doesn't mean anything at all. His friends just call him B. But around the world, B.B. King is regarded as one of the most successful and influential musicians in the history of African-American music, especially that portion of the field known as urban blues. Since he began making recordings in the 1940s he has released over 50 albums; he has been awarded five Grammy awards by fellow musicians including a "Lifetime Achievement Award" in 1987; he has received three honorary doctorates—from Tougaloo University in Mississippi, from the Berkeley (CA) College of Music and from Yale University; and,

Far left:
Don King
Photo by Debbie King

Center left:
B.B. King
Photo © Jeff Sedlik

Left:
Esther Littlefield
Photo by Ernest R. Manewal

in 1990, he was presented with the National Medal of Art by President George Bush.

He was born in 1925 on a cotton plantation in northwestern Mississippi between the towns of Indianola and Itta Bena, a hundred miles or so south of Memphis in the delta bottoms. His schooling was sporadic; like many other country children of his area, he worked in the fields when he was needed. He regrets to this day he left school in the tenth grade and received no formal education after that.

But music came to him early. He sang in local churches when he was four, and was taught a few chords on the guitar by an uncle as soon as he could hold the instrument. His aunt had an old record player and he heard Blind Lemon Jefferson, Lonnie Johnson, Peetie Wheatstraw and Leadbelly on her machine along with recordings by his older cousin, Bukka White, the famous bottleneck guitarist with whom he stayed when he hitchhiked to Memphis in 1947. His first professional breaks came in radio where he performed as the "Beale Street Blues Boy," later shortened to Blues Boy King and finally B.B. King, under which name he gained his remarkable reputation.

B.B. King has toured Africa many times; he was among the first American musicians to tour the Soviet Union and he has represented the United States at the International World Cultural Festival. His crucial influence on rock and roll and rhythm and blues has been proclaimed by George Harrison and Eric Clapton, who point out that all rock guitarists imitate his economical phrasing, his precise slurred or bent tones and his unique left-hand vibrato. He continues a schedule of performances that would daunt far younger musicians, with an average of 275 concerts a year. But every summer he uses his two-week vacation to revisit friends in Mississippi and to appear at local occasions such as concerts for inmates at Parchman Penitentiary or a festival in honor of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers.

B.B. King once said that he saw no reason why a man can't sing blues as a profession and still be a gentleman. His career has proved his case; he is a scholar and a gentleman, he is a consummate musician, and he is a cultural ambassador of whom his people and his nation can be proud.

ESTHER LITTLEFIELD (AANWOOGEEX)

Esther Littlefield was born in 1907 in Sitka, a city in southeast Alaska, that lace-like archipelago of islands that tails away southward hugging the British Columbia mainland. This is the historic home of the Tlingit and the Haida tribes, expert hunters and fishermen, boat builders and wood carvers of great renown who set their clan insignias into totem poles that once towered throughout the forest of the Pacific northwest as far south as Oregon.

Esther Littlefield is a Kiksadi, a Tlingit clan who can wear the Raven emblem. Among her people, young men are instructed in building and woodworking; young women are responsible for learning to work with fibres—basketmaking, sewing, and the construction of clothing and ceremonial robes. Mrs. Littlefield was taught at home the traditional techniques of beadwork, button designs, the handling of felt and leather; more importantly she learned from her mother to respect the meaning behind the forms. She says,

> A long time ago Mama saw beauty in the leaves from season to season,
> She'd sit somewhere and sew or weave
> She'd look around her surroundings and see all the beautiful things
> So she'd create that...
> Art should be respected. And it should be handled with care.
> People come and want to buy this...and they want information.
> They want to pay me,
> No. It's not worth all the money in the world.
> I don't want their money because this is my dignity,
> It represents my family...

But what Mrs. Littlefield will not sell, she freely and generously offers to those who want to learn, especially young Tlingit people. In recent years, she has accepted commissions from museums and other cultural institutions. She has taught bead and button work at the Southwest Alaska Indian Cultural Center since it was founded in 1969. She has demonstrated, taught and inter-

Right:
Harry Nakasone
Photo by Craig Stevens

Center right:
Irvan Perez
Photo by Nicholas R. Spitzer

Far right:
Morgan Sexton
Photo by Sam Adams

preted Tlingit culture in every major Alaskan city. In 1983 she received a special award from the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, for her commitment to Tlingit culture; in 1984, she received a Governor's Award for the Arts in Alaska and travelled to Washington, D.C. to represent her people and their art in the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife.

She continues today to participate in key arts conferences and symposia and, above all, to teach. Her lessons are straightforward and demanding. Though she knows the designs for bear, eagle, killer whale, frog, raven, and thunderbird, she sees to it that students learn the emblems proper for their own particular identity. While the class works, she discusses the meaning of the designs, the occasions on which the robes may be worn. "Art should be respected. And it should be handled with care." Mrs. Littlefield has lived her life according to her own teachings and her care and passion for her art shines throughout her work.

SEISHO (HARRY) NAKASONE

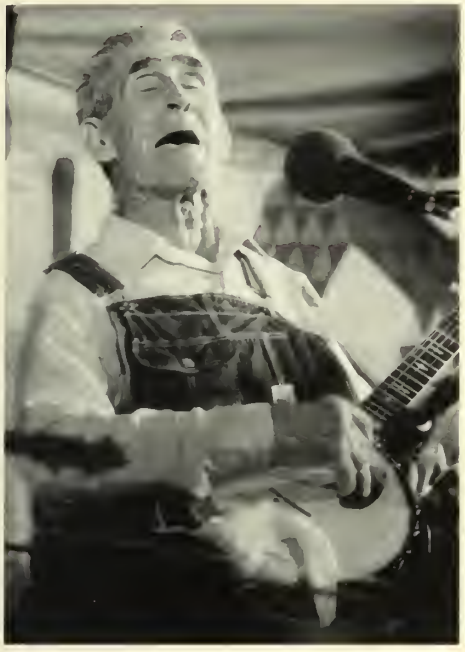
The peoples of Okinawa, the largest of a string of islands extending southward from Japan, began fanning out across the Pacific long before World War II, many of them coming to Hawaii, a fertile land where agricultural labor was essential. Work in the cane and pineapple fields was hard, wages low, and dreams of sudden wealth were quickly dashed. Still, many Okinawan families stayed on and today the Okinawan community is a

stable feature of the state of Hawaii.

Harry Seisho Nakasone was born in O'ahu in 1912; his mother, Nae Nakasone, herself a *koto* instructor, took him back to Okinawa to be reared by his grandparents. He therefore grew up in his own people's homeland and at the age of nine began playing the *sanshin*, a three-stringed instrument with a skin-covered sound box. The sanshin was probably introduced into the Ryukyu Islands from China during the 15th century, or perhaps even earlier, and from there moved to Japan where it is called the *samisen*. Harry Nakasone's uncle was an accomplished player and presented the young boy with his first instrument when he returned to Hawaii in 1925. To this day he remembers playing his beautiful instrument throughout the long and lonely voyage back to his family.

He began formal instruction in Hawaii during 1933 and for the next 20 years took lessons from every available grand master of the instrument, visiting Okinawa for that purpose many times during the 1950s. In 1938 he joined with his father in establishing a wholesale produce business, the profit from which enabled him to further his art form in every imaginable fashion. His niece, Cheryl Nakasone, herself a noted Okinawan dancer, has written the Folk Arts Program, "For almost 60 years directly or indirectly, my uncle has touched the lives of every generation of Okinawans in Hawaii, playing music for festivals, celebrations, birthday parties, anniversaries, weddings, teaching at the University and privately." He is the head of the Seifu Kai, an Okinawan classical music ensemble and is a member of the faculty of Ethnomusicology at the University of Hawaii; he has prepared cassette tapes and music books for instruction of Okinawan musicians in San Francisco and Los Angeles; he has given countless performances and taught numerous individuals and groups; he is also one of the few persons in the United States who can repair the delicate instruments. He is thus not only an incomparable musician whose technical capacities are unchallenged; he is a master of the entire musical tradition.

In 1988 a special recital program was mounted in Okinawa to honor Harry Nakasone, an unprecedented performance by five of the most important musical organizations in Okinawa involving 200 musicians—the only non-resident of Okinawa ever so honored. His years of devotion to refining his technique, expanding his repertory, increasing the depth of his understanding of his musical heritage, and sharing, with total generosity, his remarkable skills, surely qualifies him for national honors. His has been a life infused with the spirit of art.



IRVAN PEREZ

When Americans consider the widespread presence of Spanish speakers across the nation, they generally think first of those who relate to the complex cultures of Mexico in our Southwest along with those from the Caribbean islands of Puerto Rico and Cuba along our east coast. Today, one must also include sizable populations in major urban areas from almost every South and Central American nation. The older settlements dating back to Spanish exploration have dissolved and scattered over the years with two major exceptions: the villages of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado where a distinctive old culture remains to this day, and a unique area of Louisiana inhabited since the late 1700s by an immigrant colony sent by Spain from their Canary Islands.

These "Islenos" (islanders), as they called themselves, settled in what is now St. Bernard Parish in the state of Louisiana in the lower Mississippi Delta. It was a swampy and difficult terrain where survival was made possible by hunting, fishing, and energetic small farming. It was also an isolated area and to this day the older folks there continue to speak and sing in a dialect that combines Old World Spanish, 18th-century maritime Spanish and borrowings from Louisiana French.

Seventy-year-old Isleno Irvan Perez has spent all of his life on or near Delacroix Island in lower St. Bernard Parish. Delacroix, has been a sort of cultural as well as geographical island itself, and in Delacroix, Perez is considered *the* outstanding representative of Isleno culture and one of the few who know the old songs. In a rich and riveting tenor he performs a repertoire that includes songs dating back to the 15th century, such as "Don Fernando", and countless *decimas*. The decima is a distinctive narrative song of 10-line stanzas rooted in 16th-century Spain. Often satirical, it is both entertaining and a form of social commentary. While some of Perez's decimas harken back to the Middle Ages and speak of lords and ladies and the Crusades, others speak of struggling with the elements in St. Bernard's Parish. Irvan Perez's performances will be featured in a forthcoming Smithsonian Folkways recording to be released later this year.

Though an accomplished singer, Irvan Perez also knows a wealth of oral narratives—tales, riddles, and proverbs. He is a skilled woodcarver of both aesthetic and utilitarian duck decoys, using cypress to make miniatures of delta birds. Finally, he is an active keeper of the ancestral history; one could call him a community scholar. He has interviewed older community members, contributed to research for the Isleno Museum at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and made valiant efforts to place Isleno culture within the St. Bernard Parish school system. He brings his songs to audiences at local, state and national festivals. In 1983 he cooperated with the Center for New American Media in New Orleans on a videotape featuring the Islenos entitled "Mosquitoes and High Water." In himself, Perez embodies Isleno experience and artistic expression and in this way contributed significantly to our rich and varied American Hispanica. As one Louisiana scholar put it, "Future generations will be grateful for his labors."

MORGAN SEXTON

Morgan Sexton, 81 years old, was born and raised in Linefork, Kentucky, where he still lives. He tells us, "When I was very young, my cousin, Press Whitaker and me got some old lard buckets and cut the bottoms out and fixed us some banjos. They sounded awful, but we still played them like they were real banjos. When I was 17, I bought my first banjo for $10.86 from Sears. I had to walk four miles to Ulvah to pick it up. I played it all the way back home. I would try to play it every day when I got home from work."

Work began early for Morgan Sexton. His father, who first showed him banjo licks, died young leaving Morgan's mother with seven children to provide for. "When I was about 11 years old, I quit school to go to work for my uncle gathering crops. I was 13 when I worked in a saw mill for 50 cents a day. From there, I went to work cutting railroad ties. I met my wife while I was working up on Bull Creek logging timber. I was 26 when I started in the mines..." Morgan Sexton left the mines in 1976 and since then has been working in his extensive garden—almost a small farm—at home, while enduring the effects of black lung, a form of silicosis prevalent among coal miners.

Throughout his lifetime he has played for his family and friends, keeping active his remarkable repertoire of hundreds of traditional bal-

lads, love songs, and dance tunes. Both his singing and instrumental styles are amazingly pure and unaffected by contemporary effects and musical ideas. His banjo picking is a delicate and absolutely individual version of the Appalachian two-fingered style, liquid and serene, each melody using its own particular tuning in the old-fashioned way. His Appalshop friends point out he knows verses you never heard before to songs you never even knew existed, so the concentration necessary to appreciate his soft singing voice is well worthwhile.

Today Morgan Sexton lives in a comfortable home that he built with his wife, Virgie, near Bull Creek and continues to play for himself and his friends every day. Recently he has begun singing in public, and it has been a delight for his long-time friends to discover with what emotion large audiences respond to this great old musical style. He has received standing ovations at the Celebration of Traditional Music at Berea College and the Seedtime on the Cumberland Festival in Whitesburg, Kentucky, besides playing on many radio programs at local events all over his part of the mountains. Last summer he was one of the most honored guests at the Banjo Institute in Lebanon, Tennessee, where he generously demonstrated his unique style to a new generation of pickers. It was more than anyone could absorb in a single weekend, but Morgan Sexton has been teaching his nephew, Lee Sexton, for many years. One commentator at the Institute wrote: Upon hearing Morgan Sexton, there is consistently a powerful reaction: awe, in response to the unadorned beauty of his voice and banjo accompaniment; respect, for a man who has nonchalantly carried a lovely body of art and tradition into the 1990s, and thankfulness that Morgan came forward to share his music..."

NIKITAS TSIMOURIS

The island of Kalymnos is in the Dodecanese, a confusion of Mediterranean islands belonging to Greece, but lying to the extreme east along the Turkish mainland. Its long-time residents, in common with most of their Mediterranean neighbors, tend to live out of the sea and the land—fishing, sponge diving, farming, raising olives and other fruits, drinking wine from their own grapes, and milk from their small goat herds. Nikitas Tsimouris was born on Kalymnos in 1927 and lived there most of his life, bringing his family to the United States only in 1968, specifically to the Greek-American community in Tarpon Springs, Florida.

Like most farm-raised men, Mr. Tsimouris is handy; he set up a stuccoing business in Tarpon Springs, which he now runs in partnership with his son, Antonios. Although he speaks little English, he is active in the business affairs of his community. But his place in the community is far more central than that of a business man. Nikita Tsimouris has preserved and kept alive an ancient and rare musical tradition — the music of the *tsabouna*, or Greek bagpipe.

Mr. Tsimouris learned the tsabouna from his father and other male relatives while he was living in Kalymnos; its music was often used to pass the hours while sheep and goat tending. In Kalymnos, its sound was familiar; in the United States, however, it is rarely heard and certainly no player of Mr. Tsimouris's expertise has been discovered here. The tsabouna is an extremely basic

instrument, made simply of a goatskin turned inside out with the neck, tail and two leg openings tied shut. The mouthpiece and chanter (made of olive wood with two bamboo reeds) are tightly tied with string to the other two leg openings. The bag thus formed is filled with air blown in through the mouthpiece and the player hugs the bag in his arms squeezing the sound out through the chanter. Mr. Tsimouris plays it standing and occasionally holds the pressure with his arms while singing a line or two. The music is essentially designed for dancing and Mr. Tsimouris sometimes paces along with the dancers as he sets the complex 7 and 13-beat rhythms for the dancers' ears. The music is considered extremely old-fashioned, even among other Greek musicians who readily admit they know little about this ancient tradition. The music, however, serves as a strong identifier for many in recalling the by-gone days in the home country, most particularly the island of Kalymnos; and Mr. Tsimouris is always a welcome guest at weddings and other social occasions in the Tarpon Springs Greek community.

Mr. Tsimouris received the Florida Folk Heritage award in 1989. For several years, he participated as a teaching folk artist in the Florida Folklife Master-Apprentice program. In addition, he has been diligently instructing his son Antonios and his son-law George Pilatos, starting with

Far left:
Nikitas Tsimouris
Photo by Blanton Owen

Center left:
Gussie Wells
Photo by Eli Leon

Left:
Arbie Williams
Photo by Eli Leon

the five-note practice chanters, and gradually working up to the full-sized instrument. Nikitas is an excellent, patient teacher, but it will take years before any student can command his range of special effects—his "bended" notes, his ornamental grace notes, his varied dynamics. The bagpipe is everywhere associated with herding; this particular bagpipe, the tsabouna, comes from the Greek word that means to play together, and wherever a bagpipe is played it has the symbolism of rebirth. Mr. Tsimouris and his sons then are demonstrating to their community and, indeed, to us all, that the miracle of rebirth can survive vast separations of time and space, that an old tradition can continue to be meaningful and revered in a new land.

Gussie Wells and Arbie Williams

Gussie Wells was born in the country near Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1901, Arbie Williams 15 years later less than a hundred miles away across the state line near Carthage, Texas. Both were helping their mothers and grandmothers with quilting and piecing by the age of ten; both married and raised their families early; both worked hard all their lives. They did not meet until some time during the 1980s when both had moved to the California Bay area.

By that time, the two ladies had, between them, held down a remarkable variety of jobs. Mrs. Wells began working in a sawmill at the age of 16; later she did housework and hotel work in Texas, ran a candy store and worked on power sewing machines in New York City, and became owner of a San Francisco restaurant. Mrs. Williams has been a cocktail waitress, nurse, seamstress, beautician, farmer, maid and cook. During her working years, the elder Mrs. Wells did no quilting, returning happily to it during her 80s. Mrs. Williams also quilted only infrequently most of her life, although she organized a local quilting club in a little railroad town in east Texas during World War II.

Mrs. Wells and Mrs. Williams met during the 1980s when Mrs. Williams came to help the senior lady care for her elderly mother. It was an artistic meeting of consequence, for afterwards Mrs. Wells took up quilting again and since that time the two ladies have worked steadily together. Plainly they share an aesthetic sensibility and style that they learned as children; it may even turn out that the west Louisiana/east Texas/southern Arkansas region from which Mrs. Wells and Mrs. Williams come is a major aesthetic center for African-American quilting.

Like many other quilters from this region, Mrs. Wells and Mrs. Williams tend to emphasize design, bright colors and vivid contrasts; they play endlessly with the form of the square and of the straight-forward strip, disguising and exploding these essential design elements in a thousand ways. They enjoy the stark, plain geometric side of quilt construction, and they enjoy turning to positive use the inevitable "accidents" that occur in any creation. Mrs. Williams' grandmother believed that one should never make all the quilt blocks "tally"—in other words, that all the repeated blocks in a quilt should not be exactly alike. This suggests that if an irregularity does not simply occur, one might even be created purposefully, increasing the tension and the interest by including something unexpected, improvisational. There are those who compare this improvisational aesthetic philosophy demonstrated by many African-American quilters to that of African-American blues, jazz, or gospel singers who also improvise endlessly and creatively around certain basic themes.

Both Mrs. Wells and Mrs. Williams—insofar as one can separate their work—are brilliant improvisers. Yale History of Art Professor Robert Ferris Thompson has written, "Their work is a national treasure and so are they. Close study of their quilt-tops with Mondrian's work show up the latter as *bland*." The African-American quilt, as poorly understood, as incompletely documented and as infrequently celebrated as it is, is plainly a national treasure of which Mrs. Wells and Mrs. Williams are outstanding exemplars.

Melvin Wine

Melvin Wine began to play the fiddle at the age of 11. His principal

Right:
Melvin Wine
Photo by Michael Keller

influences were his father, Robert Wine, also a fiddler, and his grandfather, Nelson, a fine ballad singer, who sang tunes for the young Melvin to learn that he himself had learned from Melvin's great-grandfather, Smith Wine. At a conservative estimate, then, Melvin Wine may today be playing melodies that are 200 years old, transferred from one generation to the next without electronic or mechanical aids or even simple pencil and paper notation. It is no wonder that musicians of Mr. Wine's generation perform prodigious feats of recollection.

It is important to realize that almost no one of Melvin Wine's day and place considered it possible to earn a living by making music. Music filled in both the sociable and the lonely hours, but it had little to do with "real" life. Born to a family of modest means in rural central West Virginia, Melvin Wine had little schooling. He farmed, and hunted, and turned his hand to whatever was available. During the depression he went "on the road" with his brother Clarence, playing in restaurants and bars and over local radio stations. After three months of work at a radio station in Fairmont, West Virginia, they gave it up and came home. Since then, it appears he has worked at just about every job available in his area including several years in the coal mines; today in his eighties, he is still an active farmer.

But he always has kept on fiddling and his reputation as a fiddler has continued to grow. Over the last twenty years, he has been the most frequent winner of the West Virginia State Folk Festival Fiddling Contest in Glenville,Virginia. He has performed at all the important events of his art form: the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, the National Folk Festival, the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes in the state of Washington, the Berea Celebration of Traditional Music in Kentucky, the University of Chicago Folk Festival, and the Vandalia Gathering in Charleston, West Virginia, among many others. He has attracted a following, some drawn by his remarkably deft bow work, others by his extensive and unique repertoire.

Today Melvin Wine is generally conceded to be one of the most technically versatile fiddlers of any traditional repertoire, and one who continues to present, accurately and affectionately, the melodies of his youth. Many such musicians, heirs of a remarkable and particular tradition, would try to protect and exploit it. Melvin Wine continues the generous tradition which gave him what he has today; he teaches both small groups and fortunate apprentices, and he freely allows tape recordings of his remarkable repertoire at public performances. Apparently his teaching has stimulated his already prodigious memory; his friends report that his repertory appears to grow with his students as more and more tunes come back to him. As one of his neighbors has commented: "His lifestyle, values, and music represent the finest of Appalachian tradition, and his accessibility and willingness to share these aspects of traditional life have made a strong contribution to preserving awareness of that life in the minds of younger generations."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Meridith Stanton
Ric Trimillos
Andy Wallace
Dennis White
Joseph T. Wilson
Jesse Winch

THE NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWS 1982-1990

1982

Dewey Balfa
Cajun Fiddler
Basile, LA

Joe Heaney*
Irish Singer
Brooklyn, NY

Tommy Jarrell*
Appalachian Fiddler
Mt. Airy, NC

Bessie Jones*
Georgia Sea Island Singer
Brunswick, GA

George Lopez
Santos Woodcarver
Cordova, NM

Brownie McGhee
Blues Guitarist
Oakland, CA

Hugh McGraw
Shape Note Singer
Bremen, GA

Lydia Mendoza
Mexican-American Singer
Houston, TX

Bill Monroe
Bluegrass Musician
Nashville, TN

Elijah Pierce*
Carver/Painter
Columbus, OH

Adam Popovich
Tamburitza Musician
Dolton, IL

Georgeann Robinson*
Osage Ribbonworker
Bartlesville, OK

Duff Severe
Western Saddlemaker
Pendleton, OR

Philip Simmons
Ornamental Ironworker
Charleston, SC

Sanders "Sonny" Terry*
Blues Musician
Hollis wood, NY

1983

Sister Mildred Barker*
Shaker Singer
Poland Springs, ME

Rafael Cepeda
Bomba Musician/Dancer
Santurce, PR

Ray Hicks
Appalachian Storyteller
Banner Elk, NC

Stanley Hicks*
Appalachian Musician/
Storyteller/Instrument
Maker
Vilas, NC

John Lee Hooker
Blues Guitarist/Singer
San Carlos, CA

Mike Manteo*
Sicilian Marionettist
Staten Island, NY

Narciso Martinez
Texas-Mexican
Accordionist/Composer
San Benito, TX

Lanier Meaders
Potter
Cleveland, GA

Almeda Riddle*
Ballad Singer
Greers Ferry, AR

Simon St. Pierre
French-American Fiddler
Smyrna Mills, ME

Joe Shannon
Irish Piper
Chicago, IL

Alex Stewart*
Cooper/Woodworker
Sneedville, TN

Ada Thomas
Chitimacha Basketmaker
Charenton, LA

Lucinda Toomer*
Black Quilter
Columbus, GA

Lem Ward*
Decoy Carver/Painter
Crisfield, MD

Dewey Williams
Shape Note Singer
Ozark, AL

1984

Clifton Chenier*
Creole Accordionist
Lafayette, LA

Bertha Cook*
Knotted Bedspread Maker
Boone, NC

Joseph Cormier
Cape Breton Violinist
Waltham, MA

Elizabeth Cotton*
Black Songster/Songwriter
Syracuse, NY

Burlon Craig
Potter
Vale, NC

Albert Fahlbusch
Hammered Dulcimer Maker/
Player
Scottsbluff, NE

Janie Hunter
Black Singer/Storyteller
Johns Island, SC

Mary Jane Manigault
Black Seagrass Basket
Maker
Mt. Pleasant, SC

Genevieve Mougin*
Lebanese-American Lace
Maker
Bettendorf, IA

Martin Mulvihill*
Irish-American Fiddler
Bronx, NY

Howard "Sandman" Sims
Black Tap Dancer
New York, NY

Ralph Stanley
Appalachian Banjo Player/
Singer
Coeburn, VA

Margaret Tafoya
Santa Clara Pueblo Potter
Espanola, NM

Dave Tarras*
Klezmer Clarinetist
Brooklyn, NY

Paul Tiulana
Eskimo Maskmaker/Dancer/
Singer
Anchorage, AK

Cleofes Vigil
Hispanic Storyteller/Singer
San Cristobal, NM

Emily Kau'i Zuttermeister
Hula Master
Kaneohe, HI

1985

Eppie Archuleta
Hispanic Weaver
San Luis Valley, CO

Periklis Halkias
Greek Clarinetist
Astoria, Queens, NY

Jimmy Jausoro
Basque Accordionist
Boise, ID

Mealii Kalama
Hawaiian Quilter
Honolulu, HI

Lily May Ledford*
Appalachian Musician/
Singer
Lexington, KY

Leif Melgaard*
Norwegian Woodcarver
Minneapolis, MN

Bua Xou Mua
Hmong Musician
Portland, OR

Julio Negron-Rivera
Puerto Rican Instrument
Maker
Morovis PR

Alice New Holy Blue Legs
Lakota Sioux Quill Artist
Oglala, SD

Glenn Ohrlin
Cowboy Singer/Storyteller/
Illustrator
Mountain View, AR

Henry Townsend
Blues Musician/Songwriter
St. Louis, MO

Horace "Spoons" Williams*
Spoons/Bones Player/Poet
Philadelphia, PA

1986

Alfonse "Bois Sec" Ardoin
Black Creole Accordionist
Eunice, LA

Earnest Bennett
Anglo-American Whittler
Indianapolis, IN

Helen Cordero
Pueblo Potter
Cochiti, NM

Sonia Domsch
Czech-American Bobbin
Lace Maker
Atwood, KS

Canray Fontenot
Black Creole Fiddler
Welsh, LA

John Jackson
Black Songster/Guitarist
Fairfax Station, VA

Peou Khatna
Cambodian Court Dancer/Choreographer
Silver Spring, MD

Valerio Longoria
Mexican-American Accordionist
San Antonio, TX

Joyce Doc Tate Nevaquaya
Comanche Indian Flutist
Apache, OK

Luis Ortega
Hispanic-American Rawhide Worker
Paradise, CA

Ola Belle Reed
Appalachian Banjo Picker/Singer
Rising Sun, MD

Jenny Thlunaut*
Tlingit Chilkat Blanket Weaver
Haines, AK

Nimrod Workman
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Mascot, TN/Chattaroy, WV

1987

Juan Alindato
Carnival Maskmaker
Ponce, PR

Louis Bashell
Slovenian Accordionist/Polka Master
Greenfield, WI

Genoveva Castellanoz
Mexican-American *Corona* Maker
Nyssa, OR

Thomas Edison "Brownie" Ford
Anglo-Comanche Cowboy Singer/Storyteller
Hebert, LA

Kansuma Fujima
Japanese-American Dancer
Los Angeles, CA

Claude Joseph Johnson*
African-American Religious Singer/Orator
Atlanta, GA

Raymond Kane
Hawaiian Slack Key Guitarist/Singer
Wai'anae, HI

Wade Mainer
Appalachian Banjo Picker/Singer
Flint, MI

Sylvester McIntosh
Crucian Singer/Bandleader
St. Croix, VI

Allison "Totie" Montana
Mardi Gras Chief/Costume Maker
New Orleans, LA

Alex Moore, Sr.*
African-American Blues Pianist
Dallas, TX

Emilio and Senaida Romero
Hispanic-American Craftsworkers in Tin and Embroidery
Santa Fe, NM

Newton Washburn
Split Ash Basketmaker
Littleton, NH

1988

Pedro Ayala*
Mexican-American Accordionist
Donna, TX

Kepka Belton
Czech-American Egg Painter
Ellsworth, KS

Amber Densmore
New England Quilter/Needleworker
Chelsea, VT

Michael Flatley
Irish-American Stepdancer
Palos Park, IL

Sister Rosalia Haberl
German-American Bobbin Lacemaker
Hankinson, ND

John Dee Holeman
African-American Dancer/Musician/Singer
Durham, NC

Albert "Sunnyland Slim" Luandrew
African-American Blues Pianist/Singer
Chicago, IL

Yang Fang Nhu
Hmong Weaver/Embroiderer
Detroit, MI

Kenny Sidle
Anglo-American Fiddler
Newark, OH

Willie Mae Ford Smith
African-American Gospel Singer
St. Louis, MO

Clyde "Kindy" Sproat
Hawaiian Cowboy Singer/Ukulele Player
Kapa'au, HI

Arthel "Doc" Watson
Appalachian Guitar Player/Singer
Deep Gap, NC

1989

John Cephas
Piedmont Blues Guitarist/Singer
Woodford, VA

The Fairfield Four
African-American *a capella* Gospel Singers
Nashville, TN

Jose Gutierrez
Mexican Jarocho Musician/Singer
Norwalk, CA

Richard Avedis Hagopian
Armenian Oud Player
Visalia, CA

Christy Hengel
German-American Concertina Maker
New Ulm, MN

Ilias Kementzides
Pontic Greek Lyra Player
Norwalk, CT

Ethel Kvalheim
Norwegian Rosemaler
Stoughton, WI

Vanessa Paukeigope Morgan
Kiowa Regalia Maker
Anadarko, OK

Mabel E. Murphy
Anglo-American Quilter
Fulton, MO

LaVaughn E. Robinson
African-American Tapdancer
Philadelphia, PA

Earl Scruggs
Bluegrass Banjo Player
Madison, TN

Harry V. Shourds
Wildfowl Decoy Carver
Seaville, NJ

Chesley Goseyun Wilson
Apache Fiddle Maker
Tucson, AZ

1990

Howard Armstrong
African-American String Band Musician
Detroit, MI

Em Bun
Cambodian Silk Weaver
Harrisburg, PA

Natividad Cano
Mexican Mariachi Musician
Monterey Park, CA

Giuseppe and Raffaela DeFranco
Southern Italian Musicians and Dancers
Belleville, NJ

Maude Kegg
Ojibwe Storyteller/Craftsman/Tradition Bearer
Onamie, MN

Kevin Locke
Lakota Flute Player/Singer/Dancer/Storyteller
Mobridge, SD

Marie McDonald
Hawaiian Lei Maker
Kamuela, HI

Wallace McRae
Cowboy Poet
Forsyth, MT

Art Moilanen
Finnish Accordionist
Mass City, MI

Emilio Rosado
Woodcarver
Utuado, PR

Robert Spicer
Flatfoot Dancer
Dickson, TN

Douglas Wallin
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Marshall, NC

* (deceased)